

- 467 the villages drumming is mainly a side-line to farming. Drummers in Bida form
533 small bands or companies, the origins of which, and the type of their performance,
535 vary. Both men and women perform and women sing. Members of a single group
may come from different families. There are no *efako* arrangements. Such a band
may be in a *bara* (client) relationship to a nobleman. The various bands or com-
panies do not co-operate. The drums are made by wood-workers on the river.²⁹
- 464 Western crafts are practised for wages in the workshops of the N.A. Public
Works Dept. These craftsmen include blacksmiths, mechanics, carpenters, and
bricklayers. Temporary unskilled labour is employed mainly in occasional work
demanding a large body of unskilled labour, such as construction work of various
kinds. Most of these labourers go home and return to their permanent work at the
end of their temporary employment. Those who are farmers seek temporary
employment during the dry season only, to supplement the normal source of
income.³¹

Women's crafts

- 323 Pottery is practised individually. Jebba Island, Baro, Badeggi, and Bida are
462 famous for their pottery and there is a regular trade in both potters' clay and pots.
The main products are small water jugs and large water containers. Clay is pre-
pared from swamps at Gbako River, at Badeggi, and sold by the villagers. It is
tempered with powdered potsherd or brick. The building of the pots is individual
work, but firing is undertaken collectively. Pots are simply fired, then given a brown
wash or blackened with a concoction of shea-nut bark.
- 462 Shea-butter manufacture is carried out by women, but the roasting ovens are
553 built by men.
- 386 Indigo-dyeing is practised only by a few *Konni* groups, where the men are
weavers and the women dyers. The indigo-grass and the indigo-tree are cultivated
by men, but where the indigo is picked and prepared from wild growing grass, the
work is done by women. The dye-pot platforms are made by women; the dyeing
is carried out individually. There are a few groups of male dyers (e.g., in Mokwa),
who use a rather different technique from that employed by the women.
- 386 Women's weaving is done on upright looms 21 ins. broad, which may be of
Yoruba origin. Among the Basa-Nge, older women weave patterned raffia.
Fishing-nets in Kede are made by old men and women from *rāma* fibre.³²
- 411 Weapons and tools include spears, bows and poisoned arrows used by the more
remote groups, and knives with blades 8 to 10 ins. long. A few men use flint-locks,
and formerly a whole section of the Nupe army was equipped with guns.
- 501 Dug-out canoes are used by the Bataci as well as the Kyedye. Those of the
latter are large and square with caulked top strakes. They are mostly obtained
from Onitsha and the lower Benue.
- 534 Musical instruments include a central-hole flute (the blow-hole is midway
between the ends of the tube), pipes, clarinets (of Hausa origin), various drums and
643 rattles, long bronze trumpets (forming part of the royal insignia), and, in some
areas, bull-rovers and animal horns.
- 532 Gabi figures are statues of different origins. Two bronze figures stand unpro-
778 tected in the centre of the village of Jebba Island near a dilapidated hut which is
said to have been formerly a temple. There are seven figures at Tada village which
are kept in a round hut and carefully tended; some of these are human figures and
some animal and they appear to be of diverse origins, but are regarded traditionally
as having been left by Tsoede on his flight up the Niger.³³

²⁹ Nadel, op cit., pp. 301-3. For an outline of the *bara* system see below, p. 35.

³⁰ Nadel, op cit., pp. 304-8.

³¹ Nadel, op cit., pp. 235, 293-7; Hopkins, 1934; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

³² Temple, 1919, pp. 114, 117, 196, 333; Meek, 1925, vol. I. p. 106; Walker, 1934; see also Palmer, 1931.

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The Position of the Chief. The Kede chief, or *Kuta*, resides in Muregi. In his hands used to lie the ultimate decision on all matters concerning country and tribe as a whole—above all, war and the founding of new colonies. The *Kuta* was also the judicial head of his country. The larger part of taxes, duties, and other revenues used to flow into his private treasury. He was (and still is), finally, the official representative of his country *vis-à-vis* the overlords of Kede, the Emirs of Nupe. Impressive paraphernalia and forms of ceremonial serve to display the exalted position of the Kede chief, the most imposing perhaps being the enormous State canoe, propelled by twelve paddlers (two to three is the normal crew of the Kede canoes), in which the *Kuta* travels. The authority of the Kede chief rests in the main on three facts: first, a moral sanction of Kede chieftainship lies in its hereditary nature and the fact of its being derived, in a straight line, from a mythical first *Kuta*, who had been invested with the rule over the Kede by Tsoede himself, the ancestor-king and culture-hero of the Nupe. (We shall hear more of him later.) Another support of Kede chieftainship, of more practical order, lies in the overwhelmingly strong economic position of the Kede chief. His resources allow him to acquire a large fleet of canoes—not only the chief means of livelihood, but also the mainstay of all military action in this riverain country¹—and to attach to his household a host of followers and henchmen. The position of the Kede chief is made finally secure by the fact that the most important political offices in the Kede State are allotted to his blood relations.

The 'Offices of State'. Political offices among the Kede fall into two categories. One comprises a small group of rank-holders, *ticiyi* ('titled ones'), who reside in the capital and represent the councillors of the Kede chief. A second category comprises titled official emissaries of the *Kuta*, *egbayi* ('delegates'), who are in charge of the various Kede settlements and colonies. To these two groups of 'real' office-holders we must add a third group of what the Nupe call 'private' or 'household' ranks, which the Kede chief bestows on faithful and able followers. The majority of them live with the *Kuta* in Muregi, acting as his messengers, councillors of a lesser order, and such like; a few are entrusted with emissaryships.

¹ Laird and Oldfield (op. cit., ii, p. 379) mention that the Kede chief 'had twenty canoes of retinue'.

PLATE I-J.

MAR, SEPTEMBER, 1934.

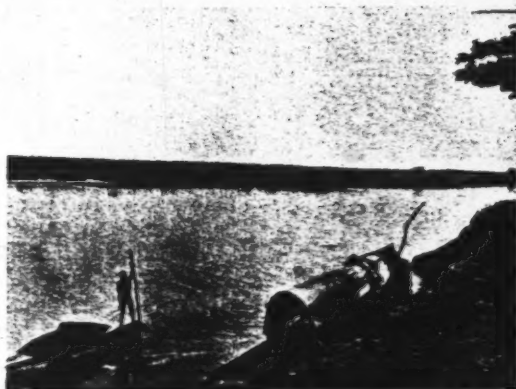


FIG. 1. LANDING-PLACE AT GHERA, ONE OF THE LING VILLAGES.



FIG. 2. THE "CHAIN OF TORRES."



FIG. 3. THE SACRED HOUSES FROTHIN AT JERRA.



FIG. 4. VILLAGE CHIEF WITH SON'S HOUSE.

THE KING'S HANGMEN IN CENTRAL NIGERIA.

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